Security Council

Fifty-fifth year

Provisional

4204th meeting

Tuesday, 3 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President	Mr. Andjaba	(Namibia)
Members	Argentina	Mr. Listre
	Bangladesh	Mr. Chowdhury
	Canada	Mr. Heinbecker
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. Levitte
	Jamaica	Miss Durrant
	Malaysia	Mr. Hasmy
	Mali	Mr. Ouane
	Netherlands	Mr. van Walsum
	Russian Federation	Mr. Lavrov
	Tunisia	Mr. Ben Mustapha
	Ukraine	Mr. Yel'chenko
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Holbrooke

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/928)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/929)

Identical letters dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/930)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/934)

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/935)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178.

00-67094 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of October, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Moctar Ouane, Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of September. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Ouane for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question

Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/928)

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Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Malaysia to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2000/935)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Algeria, Bahrain, Cuba, Egypt, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the Syrian Arab Republic, Turkey and Yemen, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Lancry (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; Mr. Baali (Algeria), Mr. Buallay (Bahrain), Mr. Dausá Céspedes (Cuba), Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt), Mr. Sharma (India), Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran), Mr. Hasan (Iraq), Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan), Mr. Abulhasan (Kuwait), Mr. Babaa (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya), Mr. Ly (Mauritania), Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan), Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar), Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia), Mr. Kumalo (South Africa), Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic), Mr. Pamir (Turkey) and Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 3 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2000/938, and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the forthcoming meeting of the Security Council to be held on Tuesday, 3 October 2000, with regard to the situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the current debate in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) took a seat at the Council table.

The President: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in response to the requests dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Representatives of Iraq, Malaysia and South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council, contained in documents S/2000/928, S/2000/929, S/2000/934 and S/2000/935, respectively, as well as the request dated 2 October 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, contained in document S/2000/930.

I should also like to draw the attention of members to document S/2000/921, letter dated 29 September 2000 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations.

The first speaker inscribed on my list is the Permanent Observer of Palestine, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I extend my congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. We also express our appreciation to your predecessor, the Permanent Representative of Mali. In addition, we would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, for your serious consideration of the item on the Council's agenda today, which represents your first task since assuming the presidency, and to express our thanks to the members of the Council, in particular the members of the Non-Aligned Movement on the Council.

On 28 September 2000, Mr. Ariel Sharon, whose record is well known, took a provocative and insulting step against Arabs and Muslims when he visited Al-Haram Al-Sharif in occupied East Jerusalem with the purpose of bolstering Israel's illegitimate claims to control the third holiest site in Islam. Mr. Sharon was accompanied during his visit by a huge number of Israeli security forces, something that led to an escalation of tensions and a sense of confrontation. This resulted in clashes at the site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif and throughout occupied East Jerusalem. Those clashes took place between Palestinian citizens protesting Sharon's visit and Israeli security forces, and caused injuries to vast numbers of Palestinian civilians.

On 29 September 2000, after Muslim Friday prayers had been held at noon, large numbers of Israeli security forces assaulted Al-Haram Al-Sharif and attacked Muslim worshippers, thereby committing a gross act of aggression against that holy place. These events recall a similar act of aggression committed by Israeli security forces against Al-Haram Al-Sharif on 8 October 1990, when those forces killed 20 Palestinians and injured 150 Muslim worshipers.

The Sharon visit and the forced entry into Al-Haram Al-Sharif by Israeli security forces resulted in a large number of injuries and touched off massive protests by Palestinian civilians in occupied East Jerusalem and across the occupied Palestinian territories. Those protests stemmed from our people's conviction of the need to defend its holy sites against Israeli aggression and from deep frustration at the Israeli Government's policies and attitudes, which have impeded any meaningful progress in the peace process that would lead to a change in the status quo, despite the genuine efforts made by many parties, including the American Administration and the American President himself.

It was surprising, therefore, that Israel, the occupying Power, reacted to the protests by Palestinian civilians as if what it had done earlier was not sufficient in itself. Israeli security forces used considerable military power, including snipers, live ammunition, hand grenades and anti-tank missiles. Later, helicopter gunships and moving tanks were brought into the vicinity of Palestinian towns and manned Palestinian police force posts.

Israeli soldiers deliberately killed a number of Palestinian civilians, including a Palestinian child, Mohammed Al-Durra, whose story is now well-known. The Israeli security forces also caused severe pain and suffering to, and inflicted serious injuries on, many other civilians. Later, on 1 and 2 October, and to a lesser extent on 30 September, certain members of the Palestinian police force, having seen firsthand the severity and brutality of the attacks mounted by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, engaged in clashes with those forces, including Israeli Army troops, using personal weapons, which resulted in the death of an additional number of police officers.

That exchange of fire does not change the basic nature of the events in question, which are in essence acts of oppression and brutality by Israeli security

forces against Palestinian civilians. That campaign of aggression resulted in 42 martyrs, including a number of children under the age of 16, and injured more than 1,200 people, many of whom are in serious condition. This appalling four-day toll, which does not include today's casualties, proves beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Israeli security forces deliberately tried to inflict the greatest possible harm on the Palestinian people, using their military machinery in an unprecedented fashion.

The actions carried out by the occupying Israeli forces over the past few days constitute a grave violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War of 1949. We believe that certain members of the Israeli Army are guilty of war crimes and must be brought to justice. This is, of course, in addition to the destructive impact of these actions on the peace agreements in place and on the peace process.

But other serious events took place inside Israel itself, not just in the Palestinian occupied territories. Some Israeli Arabs staged demonstrations and protests in solidarity with their brethren in the Palestinian territories. In response, the Israeli Government and police force took brutal action against this segment of its population, resulting in the death of 10 citizens and hundreds of injuries. We are talking about Israel itself here, not the occupied territories. We are talking about the Israeli Government, not the occupying Power. We are talking about Israeli citizens, albeit of Arab origin, not Palestinian citizens. This is yet more proof that Israel bears tremendous responsibility for the bloodshed of the past few days.

Some in Israel have tried to shift the blame onto the Palestinian side, claiming that the Palestinian Authority provoked its citizens. Only a gullible person or a racist would make such an allegation — a person blind to the manifestations of occupation, the continued suffering of the Palestinian people and the failure of the peace process to bring about genuine change in the daily lives of the Palestinian people. Such a person would have to be incapable of discerning the sense of frustration and humiliation gripping our people because of Israeli policies, including the attempt to profane our holy sites. Only a racist person would believe that a Palestinian citizen is inferior to others and can be ordered to be killed. Only a racist person could not understand that the Palestinian people have their own dignity and rights, like all other peoples on the planet.

What has happened over the past few days and the unprecedented actions of the Israeli side can be explained in one of only two ways. The first possibility is that Israel has decided to break the will of the Palestinian people and to undermine the credibility of the Palestinian leadership in order to force it to accept concessions within the framework of the peace process. The other possibility is that some Israeli military officers have taken matters into their own hands for personal or political reasons. The truth might be a mixture of these two possibilities. However, we must get to the heart of the matter and understand the facts through an investigation of what happened. Those responsible must be brought to justice. We must ensure that there is no recurrence of these bloody events in the future.

The Security Council has a very specific responsibility. It must put an immediate end to Israel's brutal campaign and to the occupying Power's violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention and relevant Security Council resolutions, as well as of the commitments undertaken in the peace accords.

This is the immediate responsibility of the Council, in accordance with the United Nations Charter. If the Council were to succeed in fulfilling these obligations, as is our hope, it would indeed have played an extremely crucial role, not only in addressing the immediate grave situation as it is unfolding on the ground and in upholding international law, including international humanitarian law, but also in creating a necessary favourable environment to enable the peace process to be resuscitated and perhaps later to be resumed with a view to achieving a final agreement between the two sides. We sincerely hope that this will be achieved.

The President: I thank the Permanent Observer of Palestine for his kind words addressed to me.

The next speaker on my list is the representative of Israel, to whom I give the floor.

Mr. Lancry (Israel): I would like, first, to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Ouane of Mali, for his most capable leadership.

Nothing would have made me happier than to be able to stand before the Council today and announce a breakthrough in the peace process. Regrettably, circumstances compel me, instead, to deliver to the Council an update on the recent events that have taken place in Jerusalem and in the West Bank and Gaza.

At the outset, I wish to express my most profound sadness at the tragic loss of human life that has occurred in recent days. In particular, I would like to express here, before the Security Council, a feeling widely shared in Israel. We mourn, together with the Palestinians, the shattering death of the young Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, as we mourn our own losses. It is precisely this human suffering that the Middle East peace process was meant to alleviate.

The events of the last few days represent the latest and most severe developments in a wave of violence that has been building in recent weeks. Although some are inclined to assign exclusive responsibility to Israel for these acts of provocation, the reality is far less simplistic. The present Palestinian escalation dates back to well before the Temple Mount disturbances, when, on 13 September, stones and Molotov cocktails were thrown at Israeli positions in the vicinity of the Netzarim junction in Gaza. This was followed by a number of increasingly violent incidents, including the killing of an Israeli soldier by a roadside bomb on 27 September and the murder of an Israeli police officer by a Palestinian policeman who served with him in a joint patrol of the West Bank on 29 September.

The events of this past Friday on the Temple Mount escalated the violence even further. Muslim worshippers, intent on provoking a violent confrontation with both Israeli police and civilians on the eve of the Jewish New Year, hurled a hail of stones at Jewish worshippers gathered at the Western Wall below. Israeli police attempted to turn back the protesters through non-violent means, but the mob persisted, trying to force its way out of the Temple Mount area and through the Mughrabim gate to the Western Wall plaza. At this point, the Israeli police, who had been deployed outside the perimeter of the Mount, were compelled to enter the area in order to push back the surging mob. The stone-throwing mob continued in its violence for a period of more than four hours.

Regrettably, the wave of widespread Palestinian violence did not stop there, despite Israeli attempts to end the clashes through dialogue. Let there be no doubt: we are not faced with peaceful demonstrators but, rather, with a coordinated escalation of violent confrontation throughout the West Bank and Gaza. In a fatal phenomenon which is now a commonplace occurrence, there have been numerous instances of live fire emanating from within rioting crowds.

Let me stress that in all the cases mentioned above, Israeli security personnel returned fire only when absolutely necessary and only when faced with an imminent threat to life and limb. Israeli forces exercised all possible restraint in their efforts to restore calm and security, and took action only as a last resort, in order to protect the lives of civilians, police officers and Israeli soldiers, as any Government would be obligated to do.

I must also stress that the responsibility for this distressing escalation lies squarely with the Palestinian Authority, not only because of its failure to take action to halt these events, but also because of its incitement of the population through inflammatory rhetoric and calls to violence. Furthermore, Palestinian Authority security forces and paramilitary groups, such as Fatah's Tanzim, have taken a leading role in the events, including the use of live ammunition against Israelis.

Even more disturbing for Israel is the wholesale violation of signed agreements regarding the use of weapons by Palestinian policemen. Yesterday alone, a soldier was ambushed and killed by a Palestinian policeman near the town of Beit Sahour. One Israeli civilian was shot and killed at close range when dropping his car off at a Palestinian-owned garage in the village of Maskheh. Palestinian attackers opened fire on an Israeli school bus near Shiloh. Israeli policemen were wounded in gunfire from armed Palestinian security forces in Jericho, Nablus, Ramallah, Netzarim and other locations. Throughout the day, I have been receiving persistent reports from our soldiers in the field about indiscriminate and unprovoked gunfire, including the use of heavy machine guns and high explosives emanating from Palestinian police positions. The Palestinian police have turned these weapons against the same Israeli soldiers with whom they carry out joint security tasks on a daily basis.

It is regrettable that at such a sensitive time in the Middle East peace process, the Palestinians have once again decided to resort to violence for political gain.

Experience has repeatedly shown that the Palestinian Authority's willingness to incite popular violence as a means to elicit concessions in the negotiations serves only to divert the peace process from its course and to hinder our ability to arrive at a permanent settlement.

At this decisive crossroads of peace negotiations, backed up by an unprecedented Israeli willingness to pursue a path of historic compromise, one major question demands our scrutiny: is Chairman Arafat truly prepared to forgo unrealistic demands and dreams and to embrace a reasonable peace? Or, will he for ever remain entrenched in his positions, and for ever play the role of the unquenchable leader of an endless Palestinian revolution?

We call upon the Palestinian leadership to act with responsibility, and to do its utmost to immediately calm the situation and to help foster a climate conducive to the advancement of peace negotiations. Specifically, we call upon the Palestinian Authority to put an end to the unrestrained use of gunfire by Palestinian police, to collect the illegal weapons in the hands of the Tanzim and to keep Palestinian protesters at a distance from Israeli positions, as is their obligation under the Oslo agreements.

I must reiterate that Israel remains committed to achieving a peace settlement with our Palestinian partners, even in the face of such violence. We call upon Chairman Arafat to contribute to the restoration of the spirit of trust and confidence between our two peoples and to resume the peace talks in earnest.

We look forward to the meeting tomorrow in Paris between Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat as an ideal opportunity to achieve this. For our part, we will continue the search for peace with the same unremitting determination that Mr. Barak has so clearly demonstrated in the recent past, and we will continue to make every effort to achieve a lasting peace and historic reconciliation between our two peoples.

The President: I thank the representative of Israel for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Holbrooke (United States of America): Mr. President, once again I must remark on the way in which Namibia's month has got off to a rather dramatic start. I hope you can slow the pace down, but I congratulate you on moving so rapidly to assemble this extremely important Security Council meeting under very difficult and complicated circumstances. I express my appreciation to my many friends, other Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives here who are waiting their turn to speak, and I hope they will understand the very difficult, complicated situation which led to the arrangements announced by the President of the Security Council a few minutes ago.

I have listened carefully to the statements of the previous two speakers, from the Palestinian Authority and from Israel, and on behalf of my Government I would like to address what they said on the situation.

The United States Government joins all the other members of the Council who, I am sure, will express their deep sorrow and regret at the violence we have seen between Israelis and Palestinians in recent days. We offer our deepest condolences to the families of the victims, particularly those who have lost children. We extend our sympathies to the injured. We pray for the restoration of peace in a region where, as both previous speakers have suggested, there has been an extraordinary effort by the leaders to achieve peace recently — in talks at Camp David, in Europe, in the Middle East and elsewhere.

What is needed now is to focus on stopping the violence and to do everything we can to encourage the parties to return to the peace process. This is the only way to end the cycle of heartbreak and sorrow. President Clinton and Secretary Albright and their colleagues are in ongoing consultations with the parties in a search for ways to end the violence. Tomorrow, Secretary Albright will meet in Paris with Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat. On Thursday, Egyptian President Mubarak will bring the parties together in Cairo for further discussions. I know that my French colleague, Ambassador Levitte, will also want to address the Paris meetings and we look forward to hearing from the Egyptian Ambassador, Mr. Aboulgheit later this afternoon with an important statement on behalf of his Government in regard to Egypt's role.

All of these meetings in Paris and in Egypt will have great importance. The world will be watching. The world will be hoping that the cycle of violence will be reversed and that the very encouraging and intense efforts to make progress will be resumed.

As soon as conditions permit, the United States will chair a meeting of Israeli and Palestinian security officials for the purpose of fact-finding and to prevent a recurrence of the events of the last few days.

But I want to stress that the first priority for all parties must be to stop the violence. Now is not the time to be apportioning blame. Israelis and Palestinians have negotiated historic agreements in the past. They have engaged in practical cooperation on the ground. Now, tragically, in full view of a horrified world, victims, innocent victims, have suffered senseless violence.

But empty rhetoric does not advance the cause of peace. Too often in the past, positions taken by the United Nations have tarnished this great Organization's credibility and undermined its ability to play a constructive role in the peace process. Let us not repeat this error again in this cycle of history. Recent events have undeniably been a setback for the peace process, and we cannot pretend otherwise. But let us not allow them to become a setback to our commitment and our efforts to move forward in the peace process and also to restore the United Nations credibility so that it may play whatever role it can in this process.

There is, of course, no place for violence, intimidation or pressure in this process, although we recognize that they have been concomitants of the problem for generations. The only way peace can be achieved — the only way the hopes and dreams of the people of the region can be fulfilled — is through negotiations. Neither side wants a future of indefinite confrontation. The way ahead lies through negotiations, to which both sides remain committed, as we have heard here today. At this delicate and dangerous moment, the Security Council should keep its focus on the task at hand: restoring calm and creating a climate in which the parties can take steps that will lead to a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

Thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting today.

The President: I thank the representative of the United States for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Levitte (France) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, it is a pleasure to convey France's congratulations and best wishes on your presidency of the Security Council. However, the circumstances that have led to the holding of this open meeting are very grave indeed.

France expresses its keenly felt emotions in the face of the heavy toll that the clashes of the last few days have taken: some 60 dead, including three children aged 10 and 12, and a thousand injured. We wish here to express our profound sympathies and offer our condolences to the families of the victims.

The President of the French Republic, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have already clearly stated our position. The European Union, whose presidency France holds for the current six-month period, has also made public statements on this tragedy. I would like, however, before this Security Council, before the United Nations, to recall France's reaction.

These events are the result of a deliberate provocation by Mr. Ariel Sharon on Thursday, 28 September. France unreservedly condemns his irresponsible visit to the sacred site of the Mosque Plaza, undertaken for reasons of domestic politics, at the most sensitive time in the peace negotiations.

France deplores the violence that grew out of that visit. Above and beyond that provocation, it is the responsibility of those who are in charge of maintaining order that is at issue. As President Chirac put it yesterday morning, "You do not fight against the emotion of a people with armour". The disproportionate use of armed force witnessed in the last several days manifestly violates the Fourth Geneva Convention. We hope that full light will be shed on this tragedy, in the framework of international machinery suited to establishing responsibility.

It is a message of responsibility that the Council must today address to the parties. We solemnly call on the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to do all they can, within their respective spheres, to contribute to easing tension. The spiral of violence must be halted. Absolute priority must be given to stopping the fighting. The ceasefire entered into during the night of Monday/Tuesday must be strictly observed. The clashes play into the hands of the provocateurs and the enemies of the peace process. Calm must return on the ground. Security must be assured.

These clashes are all the more cause for grave concern because the two parties had never been closer to peace. With impetus provided by the United States, thanks to the efforts led by President Clinton and

Madeleine Albright, efforts which France supports, each party made courageous gestures towards the other at the Camp David summit. Those discussions gave reason to hope for an event awaited for over 50 years: peaceful coexistence, peace, between Israel and the State of Palestine. This historic occasion must not be lost.

We very much hope that the meeting tomorrow in Paris between President Arafat and Prime Minister Barak will make it possible to put a definitive end to the tragedy and to resume the path of dialogue, a dialogue to which, as the events of the last few days have reminded us, there is no alternative.

France and the European Union will continue resolutely to support the peace negotiations and, at the request of the parties, to make every possible contribution. There is no other option than peace. The parties must refrain from any action that might compromise the success of the negotiations. France invites the two parties to return to the talks, respecting the resolutions and conventions that make up international law. It invites them to adopt a calm approach to all the outstanding issues, in the spirit of the decisive strides made at the Camp David summit.

Having made a statement in my national capacity, I would like, on behalf of the European Union, whose presidency, I remind the Council, France currently holds, to read the following statements made public on 1 and 2 October, beginning with the statement of 1 October:

> "The European Union is very concerned at the continued bloody clashes in Jerusalem and in the territories, and is filled with consternation at the number of victims. These events show to what extent an act of provocation in tense circumstances can have tragic consequences.
>
> "The European Union calls upon the leaders of both parties to take all necessary steps to halt the violence and prevent new provocations.
>
> "It warns against the unjustified use of force.
>
> "The European Union invites the parties to concentrate again on the quest for a negotiated peace, which is more necessary than ever."

Yesterday, 2 October, the European Union declared:

> "On the fourth day of bloody clashes between Israelis and Palestinians, the European Union once again calls for reason to put an end to violence. It feels that the disproportionate resort to force can only aggravate the situation further, raise an already particularly deadly toll, and postpone the prospect of peace at a time when it appeared to be about to become a reality.
>
> "The European Union supports the creation of an international commission charged with objectively establishing the facts of the events of the last several days, and is ready to make its contribution to the work of such a commission.
>
> "The European Union remains convinced that only a negotiated solution can meet the aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian peoples to peace and security."

The President: I thank the representative of France for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this public meeting of the Council on the present volatile situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. I also offer formally our warmest congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency of the Council.

Bangladesh is deeply concerned at the escalation of violence in the occupied territories and the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians by Israeli troops, resulting in heavy casualties. This is most tragic and totally uncalled for. The image of terror-stricken 12-year old Muhammad al-Durrah before he was shot dead continues to haunt us. We condemn such brutal acts perpetrated by the Israeli forces.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of all those killed and wounded in the recent violence. We also call for an appropriate inquiry into the events, including the possible violation of the Geneva Convention, to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. We urge all parties to act with the utmost prudence and restraint, to refrain from acts of provocation and to make all efforts to restore calm.

We believe that the cycle of violence in the region can only end through a just and comprehensive peace agreement based on the relevant United Nations resolutions and the various international agreements signed between the parties concerned in the Middle East. In this connection, we emphasize the need for

immediate and full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions regarding the withdrawal of Israeli occupation from all Arab territories, including eastern Jerusalem, as well as regarding the return of the refugees.

It is in this context that Bangladesh extends unreserved and unswerving support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral homes to live with dignity and honour. We urge Israel to refrain from all activities, including building new settlements in occupied Arab territories, that seek to alter the religious, political and ethnic character of these territories.

It is most unfortunate that, just when the peace process in the Middle East had reached a crucial stage, an Israeli leader's calculated provocation resulted in the recent escalation of violence in the occupied territories, putting the whole process in jeopardy. We reiterate the call for putting the peace process back on track and, in this context, welcome the initiative of the United States to convene a meeting between the leaders of Palestine and Israel in Paris tomorrow.

The President: I thank the representative of Bangladesh for his kinds words addressed to me.

Mr. van Walsum (Netherlands): It is good to see you in the chair again, Mr. President, for the first time since August 1999.

Let me also pay tribute to Ambassador Ouane, who so ably chaired our Council during the difficult millennium month of September.

My delegation's contribution to this debate is somewhat different from what I would have said if this meeting had been held yesterday. Our sorrow at all the tragic loss of life and large-scale human suffering, our consternation at the excessive violence used by the Israeli forces and our anger at Mr. Sharon's irresponsible visit to the steps of the ancient shrines in the Old City are not any less intense today. But today, we are meeting on the eve of the Paris summit, at which the parties will try to salvage the Middle East peace process and resuscitate the efforts to reach a lasting settlement.

In that light, it would seem more appropriate for us to express our gratitude for the fact that, in spite of everything that has happened, both sides seem to be beginning to bring the situation under control, thus setting the tone for tomorrow's meeting in Paris.

Against the background of the events of the past six days, it is not easy to be optimistic, but it may just be possible that these events have at last convinced everyone of the urgency of a negotiated, lasting settlement.

The President: I thank the representative of the Netherlands for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): My delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of October and assures you of our fullest cooperation. I should also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali, for the admirable way in which he conducted the work of the Council last month.

My delegation expresses its appreciation to you for convening this urgent meeting of the Council to consider the grave situation in Palestine in response to requests for such a meeting, including from Malaysia in its capacity as the Chairman of the Islamic Group at the United Nations and as coordinator of the caucus of non-aligned members of the Council. We are therefore doubly grateful to you.

My delegation is deeply dismayed at the turmoil that has descended on Palestine, particularly in East Jerusalem and Gaza, as well as in several Arab townships in Israel, following the provocative visit to the sacred Islamic site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif by the leader of the Likud Party, Mr. Ariel Sharon. To date, some 51 Palestinians — most of them innocent civilians — have been killed and over 1,000 wounded as a result of the massive use of deadly force by Israeli security forces. My delegation mourns these senseless deaths and offers its profound condolences.

My delegation strongly condemns the actions of the Israeli security forces against defenceless Palestinian civilians at Al-Haram Al-Sharif that have led to unnecessary bloodshed and loss of life. Malaysia also condemns the visit of the Likud Party leader to Al-Haram Al-Sharif in utter disregard of and contempt for the religious sensitivities of the Palestinians. His visit at a particularly delicate juncture in the peace process cannot be seen as anything but a brazen act intended to provoke Palestinian reaction. Given his well-known record and attitude towards the peace

process, it is not difficult to delve into the motivations that prompted him to visit the sacred site in the first place. It was a blatantly cynical and irresponsible exercise of political power for self-serving political ends. His visit, accompanied by heavily armed Israeli security forces, was no friendly visit. He did not go there as an ordinary visitor or tourist. He went there to assert the Israeli claim over the sacred site and over all of East Jerusalem at a particularly sensitive time. From his perspective, of course, Mr. Sharon's timing was nothing less than perfect.

It is very sad indeed that, instead of apportioning blame where it squarely belongs, the finger is now being pointed at the Palestinian Authority as if it had invited Mr. Sharon to visit Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

We have read news reports and witnessed on our television screens excessive and disproportionate use of force by Israeli security forces, which have used grenades, rocket launchers, tanks and helicopter gunships against civilians armed, for the most part, with only the most primitive of weapons, if you can call them that: crude rocks and stones. The world will not forget the image of the 12-year old child being brutally shot and killed in the arms of his own father while seeking protection behind a concrete wall. The fates of the boy and his father sum up the plight of the Palestinians living in the occupied Arab territories in general: that of very vulnerable people living in the territories who are from time to time caught haplessly in situations of violence and subjected to the draconian policies and practices of the army of an occupying Power. As a member of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories, I am personally familiar with the plight of the Palestinian people living there.

My delegation calls on the Israeli authorities to put an immediate stop to the high-handed actions of their security forces and to bring to justice those directly and wilfully responsible for these tragic deaths. These actions constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This Council has a clear responsibility to put an end to violations of the Convention, as well as to ensure the safety and protection of civilians, especially innocent children.

My delegation reaffirms its position that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be achieved only with the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and occupied Syrian Golan. We also reaffirm that establishing an independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, along with the implementation of all international resolutions on the Palestinian issue, are the only guarantees for lasting peace between Israel and Palestine.

Malaysia reaffirms its recognition of Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the political and historical capital of the Palestinian people and State. We recognize Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the meeting point of the three divine religions and the site of coexistence between the three great civilizations and cultures, and we recognize that it forms an integral part of the Palestinian lands occupied since 1967. We once again call on Israel, the occupying Power, to comply with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and all other relevant resolutions of the Council.

The grave situation in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory must be addressed immediately by the international community, especially this Council, which is entrusted with the maintenance of international peace and security. We must exercise our responsibility in order to ensure the safety and protection of the Palestinian people, rescue the Middle East peace process and enhance the prospects for peace in the region. My delegation welcomes the upcoming meeting on Wednesday, 4 October, in Paris and commends the efforts of the United States and France in this regard. We trust their efforts will bear fruit. We hope that the meeting will find a way to end the acts of provocation and violence and to restore peace. More importantly, we hope that the meeting will address the urgent issue of resuming the peace negotiations, leading to a final political settlement, thereby fulfilling the hopes and aspirations of all peace-loving Arabs and Jews.

The President: I thank the representative of Malaysia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Like representatives of other delegations, I, too, would first of all like to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to extend thanks to your

predecessor, Ambassador Ouane, for the work that he and his delegation did in September.

The Russian Federation is deeply disturbed by the sharp deterioration of the situation in the Palestinian territories, Israel and East Jerusalem. We deeply regret that the new outbreak of violence has led to the deaths of dozens of people, including children. In this connection, we extend condolences to the families of those who have died.

These tragic events were the result of provocative acts committed in the Muslim holy places on 28 September. These acts were clearly intended to derail any forward movement on the Palestinian-Israeli track of a Middle East settlement.

For its part, the Russian leadership took immediate steps to help defuse the situation. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia, Mr. Ivanov, had urgent telephone conversations with the leadership of Israel and that of the Palestinian Authority. He urged that the necessary steps be taken to normalize the situation and to avoid any provocation.

We strongly condemn any kind of provocative acts, from whatever source, and similarly, we strongly condemn any manifestations of extremism that are aimed at derailing the negotiating process between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. In addition, we cannot but be concerned about the Israeli troops' excessive use of force, with lethal weapons.

Russia, as a co-sponsor of the peace process in the Middle East, urges the sides to demonstrate maximum restraint so as not to allow for any further outbreaks of violence. We also urge them to take steps to stabilize the situation. Only in this way will it be possible to revive the peace dialogue and arrive at acceptable agreements.

In this connection, we welcome the meeting, to be held tomorrow in Paris, between the Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Barak, and Chairman Arafat. We sincerely desire to see that meeting succeed. We have noted the efforts made by the United States and France in organizing the meeting. We believe that that meeting should put an end to the current wave of violence. It is also particularly important to get the sides back to the negotiating table.

Now it is necessary to make every effort to not allow those who oppose a just peace between the Israelis and Palestinians to undermine the peace process. The Security Council must continue in the future to pay close attention to the situation in the Middle East, including in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Council must respond adequately so as to help to create a propitious political atmosphere for arriving at a comprehensive settlement.

The President: I thank the representative of the Russian Federation for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Yel'chenko (Ukraine): We congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency and on the convening of today's urgent and important meeting of the Security Council. We also pay tribute to Ambassador Moctar Ouane of Mali for his excellent work during the month of September, which led to the convening of the Security Council Summit.

Ukraine is deeply concerned about the high level of violence that broke out in the course of the past several days at the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound in East Jerusalem and spread to other parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as to some parts of Israel. We were shocked and appalled by the disproportionate use of force, in particular the use of heavy weapons, by the Israel Defence Forces and by police against Palestinian civilians, which claimed the lives of more than 60 people, including Palestinian children, and left more than 1,500 people wounded or injured. We are similarly shocked by the casualties on the Israeli side.

I would like to add my voice to that of delegations that expressed their condolences to the families of all those who have been killed and wounded in these tragic events. We are hopeful that the ceasefire, which has been in place since dawn today, will hold, helping to prevent further loss of life and injuries among the civilian population.

My country strongly condemns all acts of violence and aggression by whomsoever committed. We urge the parties to stop the hostilities, to refrain from unilateral provocative actions and to persevere in their efforts aimed at reaching a final settlement agreement as soon as possible. The lives of innocent civilians should remain an absolute priority. In this connection, we call on Israel to ensure full respect for the Fourth Geneva Convention in the Palestinian territories.

Ukraine has always been supportive of the Middle East peace process, which is based on the

relevant United Nations resolutions and the principles laid down at the Madrid Peace Conference. We are convinced that the Palestinian and Israeli sides have no alternative but to complete the implementation of the Madrid peace process formula, which is based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the principle of land for peace.

It is also our firm belief that the political wisdom and far-sightedness of the Israelis and Palestinians will eventually help them reach a mutually acceptable compromise on such sensitive issues as the fate of the Holy City of Jerusalem and other permanent status issues. Ukraine hopes that, as a result of the strenuous efforts of the two sides, the Palestinian people will at long last find themselves in a position to exercise in full its right to self-determination and statehood.

We look forward to the forthcoming Israeli-Palestinian summits, to take place in Paris and Cairo. My country welcomes the readiness of France and Egypt to host these important events at such a critical moment. Ukraine highly commends the efforts of the United States in this regard. My delegation also welcomes the constructive engagement of the Secretary-General and his special representative on this issue.

Finally, my delegation believes that the Security Council should continue to follow closely the developments on the ground and act, as appropriate, in exercise of its primary responsibility for maintaining peace and security. Ukraine is also of the view that the United Nations should retain its permanent responsibility towards the question of Palestine until it is resolved in conformity with the relevant United Nations resolutions.

The President: I thank the representative of the Ukraine for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Sir, on having assumed the office of President. I am delighted that the Council will be guided by someone with such experience, firmness, determination and sense of duty at a time when it is dealing with so delicate a situation as is before us this afternoon. Allow me also to thank the Ambassador of Mali for his effective leadership of the Council last month, also a very important period, with the holding of the Millennium Summit.

The Argentine Republic observes with great concern and deep regret the clashes that have caused upheavals in Israel and in the Palestinian territories in recent days. My country condemns the violence and regrets the fact that innocent lives have been taken, and it extends its most heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. Argentina rejects the excessive use of force and urges the parties involved to act with the maximum caution, and in particular to refrain from causing or tolerating acts of provocation, which could exacerbate the delicate situation and jeopardize the peace process.

My delegation reaffirms the need to pursue the peace process, the only way to resolve the Middle East conflict, and urges the parties to return to the negotiating table in order to reach a definitive solution to the conflict, taking into account Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1974).

This is an opportune time to reaffirm my country's position regarding the Middle East conflict. The Argentine Republic has traditionally recognized Israel's right to live in peace with its neighbours within secure and internationally recognized borders. Similarly, we recognize the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the establishment of an independent sovereign State, which we hope can live in peace and harmony with Israel and its other neighbours.

Argentina welcomes the initiative of the United States Government in convening a meeting of the leaders of Israel and Palestine in Paris tomorrow, 4 October. We congratulate the United States Government on this timely action and the French Government on hosting the meeting. We also support the initiative of the Egyptian Government in holding a meeting between Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat in Cairo on 5 October. We hope that these initiatives will help the parties control the situation and put an end to the violence.

The President: I thank the representative of Argentina for his kind words addressed to me.

Ms. Durrant (Jamaica): Allow me to welcome you, Sir, to the presidency and to assure you of the Jamaican delegation's support as you guide the work of the Council. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency Moctar Ouane of Mali, who presided so ably over the Council during the busy month of September.

My delegation wishes to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open meeting of the Council, which provides an opportunity for members and non-members of the Council to express their views on the tragic developments related to the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question.

Jamaica regrets the recent outbreak of violence that has erupted in Jerusalem and in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and condemns the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians, which has unfortunately resulted in the tragic loss of so many innocent lives. We express our deep condolences to the families of the deceased.

We urge the parties to refrain from the use of force and provocative acts which could serve to undermine the peace process. We appeal to them to take immediate steps to create the necessary environment for the restoration of peace and stability and the continuation of talks leading to a comprehensive and lasting settlement.

The Council has been seized of the situation in the Middle East over the past 50 years, during which the Council has continuously encouraged an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through an active negotiating process which takes into account the right to security for all States in the region, including Israel, as well as the legitimate and inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Over the years there have been several commendable initiatives aimed at achieving this goal by the United Nations as well as by individual States and regional organizations. The situation in the region continues to require our collective action in order to remove threats to international peace, to prevent breaches of the peace and to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the dispute. We subscribe to the view that it is only through negotiation that a lasting solution will be found.

The outbreak of violence comes at a time when strenuous efforts are being made to bring peace to the region and at a critical juncture when the leaders of both Israel and Palestine are engaged in serious negotiations. Recently the Council addressed the situation in southern Lebanon, and my delegation expressed the hope that the developments there would serve as a stimulant to the peace process. Jamaica is therefore very concerned about the destabilizing effects that the recent developments may have on the Middle East peace process as a whole. We would not like to see the unravelling of the process, and therefore attach importance to the efforts of the Secretary-General, through his Personal Representative, Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen, who is expected to hold talks with both parties. We also welcome the forthcoming meetings to be held in Paris on Wednesday, 4 October, between United States Secretary of State Albright and Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat, and in Cairo on the following day under the auspices of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt.

The negotiations for peace are complex and have been dogged with periodic setbacks over the years. Despite that, we must continue the search for peace. It is my delegation's hope that these talks will lay the foundation for progress and provide the necessary environment for sustainable peace.

The President: I thank the representative of Jamaica for her kind words addressed to me.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): It is certainly right that we should be discussing this item at this time. We and all of our partners in the European Union have been shocked by the violence in Jerusalem, elsewhere in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and in Israel in the past few days.

We deplore the catastrophic loss of life and are horrified in particular by the deaths of innocent children. It is alarming how quickly in this theatre of tension the recourse to violence can get so out of hand. Those who have been fuelling the violence of the last few days are people who want to derail the peace process, and they cannot be allowed to succeed.

These tragic events bring home the need for a new urgency in resolving the outstanding issues in the Middle East peace process. It is vital that the violence come to an end so that peace talks can get under way again. In that regard, we welcome the talks that the United States Secretary of State will host in Paris tomorrow between Prime Minister Barak and President Yasser Arafat and those that President Mubarak of Egypt will host in Cairo on Thursday, 5 October. There needs to be a return to diplomacy and negotiation.

The Middle East region needs to achieve a comprehensive, just and lasting peace to benefit all its peoples. The region's future and its people's prosperity will depend partly on trade and cooperation between them.

Britain and the rest of the European Union have made clear their commitment to assist the region to develop in that way. But progress will be painfully slow unless we have a peace agreement. Only a peace agreement will enable the people of the region to realize their potential. It is the duty of the region's leaders to make sure that we turn away from violence and conclude a negotiated peace. If they fail, they fail their peoples. They must show the strength and wisdom to overcome the immediate difficulties and to focus on achieving peace as a priority, and so pave the way to a brighter future.

So, the immediate task is to break this cycle of violence and the use of force. We call for calm, and we urge both parties to exercise the utmost restraint.

The President: I thank the representative of the United Kingdom for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Like other members, I wish, Sir, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We believe that you will carry out your duties with success, as you have done over the past few days. I wish also to congratulate Ambassador Ouane on his outstanding contribution in September.

The Chinese delegation thanks you very much, Mr. President, for convening this meeting to consider the recent bloody events in Jerusalem and other places. Over the past five days, Jerusalem and other occupied Arab territories have been the scene of sustained violence. It is appalling that Israeli military police have used helicopters, tanks and rockets against Palestinian civilians, causing many casualties and deaths among civilians, including, in particular, children. China expresses its strong condemnation and indignation in that regard, and wishes to convey its condolences to the families of the victims.

The conflicts that have raged over the past few days must be completely stopped, or more innocent civilians, women and children in particular, will continue to suffer death or injury.

The Security Council bears primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. It is duty-bound to protect civilians in Palestine. The Council must send the strongest possible signal that these bloody incidents, in which innocent civilians have been the victims of violence, must be brought to an end.

Palestine and Israel are now engaged in negotiations on such sensitive issues as the final status of Jerusalem. The entire peace process is at a critical stage, yet an Israeli opposition leader made a sudden visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif and made a controversial statement. That was a most irresponsible, provocative act that the Council ought to condemn.

It is China's strong hope that, at this critical juncture, the parties concerned will exercise the utmost restraint and halt all statements and actions detrimental to the peace process, and that they will create the conditions necessary for resuming and accelerating the peace negotiations. We also expect the upcoming Paris and Cairo meetings to yield positive results enabling the arduous peace negotiations to continue and making it possible, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, to achieve a settlement of the Palestinian issue at an early date.

The President: I thank the representative of China for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canada is most concerned at the violence that has occurred in recent days in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. We appeal to both parties to do everything necessary to put an immediate end to the hostilities and to work together on specific measures to prevent the repetition of such a situation.

Israeli and Palestinian leaders must do everything necessary to ensure that security forces and civilians act with restraint, and to prevent any statement or other action that could make the situation more tense than it already is.

(*spoke in English*)

We deplore the loss of life on both sides, particularly the deaths of innocent children, which have understandably appalled the world. Canada extends its sincere condolences to the families of the victims.

Further inflammatory actions at this critical time will serve only to disrupt the negotiations and to provoke further violence. Responding to them will serve only the interests of those who would seek not to make peace. In that context, Mr. Sharon's visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif/Temple Mount last Thursday did

not serve the cause of peace, and has in fact damaged it — if only, as we hope and expect, temporarily.

There has been violence on both sides, but the disproportionate and excessive use of force and the very large number of Palestinian civilian fatalities have been particularly disturbing. This violence is especially heart-wrenching because it is so unnecessary. Israeli and Palestinian leaders have demonstrated the ability to understand the needs of the other party and the willingness to work together to achieve a just and honourable peace. Over the past decade, together, they have achieved through negotiation what many thought impossible. They must not falter so close to the goal.

Both Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat understand that the needs and aspirations of both Israelis and Palestinians can be met only through negotiations and through the peace that negotiations will bring. Canada therefore strongly endorses the efforts of the United States and Egypt to bring the parties together again.

Perhaps this chapter of the conflict will finally have persuaded everyone concerned that peace is necessary and possible now. The Security Council will have fulfilled its role if our efforts contribute to the return of the parties to the negotiating table with renewed determination to end this conflict and to make the peace that is the right of ordinary Israelis and Palestinians.

The President: I thank the representative of Canada for the kind words he addressed to me.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish at the outset to thank you, Sir, for convening this formal meeting of the Security Council at the very start of your presidency of the Council for the month of October. We appreciate the serious-mindedness and determination you have demonstrated in discharging your responsibilities, and we wish you every success as you carry out your duties this month. I take this opportunity also to pay tribute to Ambassador Ouane for his skilful stewardship of the Council last month.

This meeting is of extraordinary importance because of the painful events and distressing developments we are witnessing in the occupied Palestinian territories. The situation in Jerusalem and in the occupied Palestinian territories is highly explosive, and grows more dangerous daily owing to the provocative actions being taken against Palestinian citizens and against their religious feelings.

As part of the campaign mounted by the Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians, particularly in Jerusalem, as pointed out by all speakers, the Israeli military forces have used excessive force, including snipers, live ammunition, helicopter gunships and tanks in Palestinian towns to gun down innocent Palestinian civilians. These brutal acts by Israeli forces resulted in the deaths of scores of Palestinians, including innocent children, and injury to hundreds of Palestinian civilians. That intimidated the entire population, which should have enjoyed the protection of the occupying Power.

We in Tunisia express our profound condolences to the families of the victims. We strongly condemn those Israeli actions, which violate the Geneva Conventions and are a violation of holy sites.

The Permanent Observer of Palestine has outlined the events that graphically show the gravity of the situation and its deterioration. These actions not only are a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and Israel's responsibilities towards its citizens, they also constitute a serious threat to the peace process in the Middle East. Against this serious backdrop, the whole world is looking to the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security, to carry out its responsibility. The world expects quick action to stop the serious deterioration of the situation, to protect innocent, helpless Palestinian civilians and to demonstrate respect for hundreds of millions of Muslims worldwide, primarily through the withdrawal of Israeli security forces from Al-Haram Al-Sharif and ending the brutal campaign against the Palestinians.

Delays in ending these violations and provocations will exacerbate the situation and aggravate the Palestinian population's sense of frustration and injustice at this critical moment, when the Middle East peace process needs everyone's support and commitment, especially that of the parties directly involved. The occurrence of these events at this particular juncture of the peace process places it in jeopardy. This will only serve the interest of the parties that have no interest in the peace process.

Our duty today, as it has been since the beginning of the peace process, is to deny the efforts of those parties and to create conditions for resuming and

continuing the peace process, which is the responsibility of the international community, particularly the co-sponsors and the European Union, in order to end one of the most serious and complicated conflicts of the twentieth century.

The Security Council is called upon to create those conditions by authorizing an immediate and transparent international inquiry into these events so that the peace process can resume with a view to achieving a lasting, comprehensive and just peace, based on United Nations resolutions and the land-for-peace formula agreed to by all parties.

Today's urgent Security Council meeting is a clear invitation to stand up to the use of power, to show our respect for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their religious sentiments, to show our sympathy for the victims' families, to create conditions to restore and revive the peace process and to encourage dialogue and negotiation. These actions are at the core of Security Council responsibilities, which remains the highest authority charged with maintaining international peace and security.

In this context, we hope the Palestinian-Israeli summit, to be held tomorrow in Paris under the sponsorship of the United States, will help calm the situation and seriously advance the peace process by showing respect for international law and the agreements undertaken by the parties concerned.

The President: I thank the representative of Tunisia for his kind words addressed to me.

Mr. Ouane (Mali) (*spoke in French*): Mali is happy to see the Security Council meet under your leadership during the month of October, Mr. President. I wish to thank you for the kind words that you and other members of the Council have addressed to me in connection with Mali's term as President of the Council.

My delegation is grateful to you for having organized this open debate. As was expressed publicly by the Government of Mali on 1 October, I wish to reaffirm our sympathy for the families of the victims. Secondly, true to its principles, Mali strongly condemns all acts of violence and aggression, including the bloodshed of the last five days.

Thirdly, Mali strongly supports the creation of an international fact-finding commission to establish responsibility for the events of the last few days. Fourthly, following the shocking images shown by the media over the last few days, we believe it is urgently necessary that the provisions of the 1949 Geneva Protocols be respected.

Fifthly and lastly, for Mali the renewal of the peace process is the only way to reach a settlement of this continuing problem. In this context, the visit to Paris on 4 October by President Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak offers a useful opportunity to help end the violence and renew the parties' commitment to resuming the peace process.

The President: I thank the representative of Mali for his kind words addressed to me.

I shall now make a statement in my national capacity.

My delegation is deeply shocked by and strongly condemns the recent violence unleashed by Israeli security forces against Palestinian civilians, including innocent women and children. My delegation is particularly shocked by the large number of deaths and injuries that were caused by the excessive use of force and the indiscriminate deployment of heavy weaponry, such as helicopter gunships and tanks, by Israel.

I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's profound condolences to the families of all those killed and wounded. In my delegation's view, the actions by the Israeli security forces constitute serious breaches of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Israel, as the occupying Power, should scrupulously ensure that all the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention are fully implemented.

The events of the past few days resulted undoubtedly from the irresponsible and provocative visit by Mr. Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The sensitive nature of his action was well known, and what happened can only be viewed as a deliberate provocation. This has unfortunately caused a serious setback to the delicate peace negotiations under way.

In view of the setbacks, it is now more than ever required of the parties to end violence and to exercise the utmost restraint, which are prerequisites for a return to the peace process. My delegation therefore calls on both the Palestinian and Israeli parties to resume negotiations towards a peaceful settlement. It is most

important that they do not play into the hands of those who wish to derail the peace process. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the proposed summit to be held in Paris tomorrow, as well at the one to be held in Cairo on Thursday.

Full peace will never return to the Middle East until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine is reached on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions. Only an independent State of Palestine will give the Palestinian people back their humanity. The image of that 12-year-old — that sad and cold image — must serve as a reminder to all of us of the urgency of establishing an independent State of Palestine. The international community should not further victimize the Palestinian people. There has been enough human suffering. The Security Council has a responsibility towards the people in the Arab occupied territories.

To that end, my delegation wishes to reiterate its support for the efforts of the Secretary-General and his special representative to address the issue. We also call on the international community to provide the necessary humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Egypt. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of October. I trust that, with your abilities and wisdom, you will be able to guide our deliberations on this important and critical issue so that the Council can assume the role of maintaining international peace and security that has been entrusted to it by the entire membership of the United Nations.

The Government and the people of Egypt are enraged not only because our Palestinian brethren are suffering as a result of Israeli acts of aggression, violence and oppression, but also because of the intransigent and truth-denying position of Israeli officials, who will not even admit Israel's clear responsibility for the bloody events that have taken place before the eyes of the entire world.

We meet in the midst of an explosive situation in the occupied Palestinian territories brought about as a result of rage and oppression. That rage exists because of last week's provocative visit by the leader of the opposition party to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Without any sense of shame, that leader declared that his visit was aimed at asserting what he referred to as Israel's right to the holy place that is home to the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Those two monuments bear within themselves clear testimony to the sovereignty of the Islamic and Palestinian nation over them.

Everyone knows that the opposition leader is a staunch opponent of the peace process and of the legitimate restoration of the rights of Palestinians, as well as someone whose aim is to inflame feelings and incite anger and violence among the Palestinian people. What we should really wonder about is the position of the Israeli Government. On the one hand, that Government claims that it is working for peace and the achievement of a permanent solution to the Palestinian conflict. On the other hand, we see that Government allowing such a provocative visit to take place, even providing tight security for it.

That situation makes us wonder seriously about coordination between the Government and the opposition in Israel. We see it as a desperate attempt to bring pressure to bear on the Palestinian party with regard to the issue of sovereignty over the holy sites in Jerusalem, and in particular over Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

With regard to oppression, I do not really feel the need to discuss that issue in detail before the members of the Council. International media have recently shown us the sad and tragic pictures of Palestinian children, youths and men being gunned down by the Israeli army. We have all seen the bloody and tragic scene of the death of a Palestinian child in the arms of his father. I hope that those scenes, which have broken our hearts in Egypt and in the Arab world, will prompt the members of the Security Council to act decisively against the perpetrators of those atrocities.

The crux of this serious crisis can be seen in one major element, namely, the question of Jerusalem — East Jerusalem and the Old City in particular, which have been forcibly occupied by Israel since 1967, as have all other Palestinian territories. The international community, members of the Security Council and world public opinion have once again seen, from the repercussions of the provocative visit to Al-Haram

Al-Sharif by the leader of Israel's Likud Party, how deeply Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims feel about the Holy City. The people of the world may also appreciate how indignant they themselves would be if their sanctuaries were to be similarly defiled.

The repercussions of recent events also prove to everyone that Israel's claim that 98 per cent of the Palestinian people are under Palestinian rule is totally unfounded. Israeli tanks encircle Palestinian cities. Live ammunition is used against demonstrators in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian people are still under occupation. Even those places that were liberated are stifled by Israeli forces when and as they please.

Some say that political measures, regardless of when they occur and under what circumstances, must target peace and support the peace process, and that that can happen only if the Security Council is kept out of political developments in the region and if such measures are confined to the respective parties. We believe that the achievement of peace in the region is Egypt's first priority, as is well known. Egypt is working tirelessly, with determination and wisdom, with the co-sponsor of the peace process, the United States of America, and with other parties for the realization of this objective.

This does not mean, however, that the Security Council is exempt from its responsibilities under the Charter. The truth is still there, before our very eyes. There is an occupying force, an occupied people and occupied territories. There are international conventions applicable to these territories and to the situation and the status of the people. Foremost among these conventions is the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, the applicability of which was confirmed by the Security Council in its earlier resolutions. The Council reiterated that these provisions apply to all Palestinian territories, including Holy Jerusalem.

Accordingly, we call on the Security Council to take measures that guarantee the non-entry by the armed Israeli forces, including security and Army forces, into the courtyard of Al-Haram Al-Sharif; demand the immediate cessation of any harassment by the Israeli Army of the Palestinian people; condemn the acts perpetrated by the occupying Power in the Palestinian territories; and call on the occupying Power to abide by international legality and the provisions of the relevant conventions, foremost among which is the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We also call on the Security Council and its members to reiterate their position that the Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, are occupied territories, to which the Geneva Conventions apply. Secondly, we call on the Council to investigate the shameful events that have occurred and to hold accountable the Israeli officials who opened fire on Palestinian civilians and to bring them to justice. Thirdly, the Council must condemn the provocative visit of the leader of the Israeli opposition party. Fourthly, it must work to guarantee the right to compensation of the Palestinian civilians who were injured or killed by these Israeli acts of aggression.

President Hosni Mubarak has already sent an invitation to Chairman Arafat and to the Israeli Prime Minister, as well as to Mrs. Madeleine Albright, the American Secretary of State, to visit Egypt on Thursday to discuss recent events and determine their cause; to put an end to Israeli provocations and see to it that they do not recur; and to reinvigorate the peace process, to which we attach great importance.

A just and equitable peace is our common objective. However, achieving this peace calls for sincere determination on the part of both parties. Sensationalism and negative provocations such as the recent visit I spoke of earlier should not be allowed to overshadow the sincere efforts of the American co-sponsor of the peace process and the concerned parties.

If the Israeli side believes that it is in its interest to escalate the situation so that it can achieve some political gains, we would like to warn it, before the Council, that such an approach will greatly jeopardize the peace process. Israel must understand the sensitivity of the situation with regard to the status of Jerusalem. It must stop using military oppression to defend political positions that it knows full well lack any basis in international law or international legitimacy. It knows also that such positions lack any international support.

Al-Haram Al-Sharif is, and will remain, an Islamic site. East Jerusalem is a Palestinian occupied territory. Israel must terminate its occupation sooner or later. We hope that the Council will understand the gravity of the situation and act accordingly.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of South Africa. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): It is a great joy, Mr. President, to see you guide us in this meeting today. I regret that these are not happy circumstances in which we could have celebrated your presidency of the Council. I wish also to express our great respect for and joy at the stewardship of the Ambassador of Mali in the previous month.

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that we have met on a similar issue. Ten years ago, on 12 October 1990, the Council expressed alarm at the violence which took place at Al-Haram Al-Sharif and other holy places in Jerusalem.

At that time, the Security Council adopted resolution 672 (1990) condemning the acts of violence committed by the Israeli security forces, which had resulted in injuries and loss of human life. Furthermore, the Council called upon Israel to abide meticulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War — the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 — which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It is thus with bitter regret that today we gather again in an emergency meeting to once again condemn acts of violence related to that holy place. Especially alarming is the use of live ammunition against civilians by the Israeli security forces.

Last Thursday, Mr. Ariel Sharon, leader of the Likud Party, led a defiant and provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif in occupied East Jerusalem. This was done in total disregard of the advice of some in the Israeli Government and other international role players. Mr. Sharon acted as a catalyst of this latest occurrence of violence. It cannot be denied that such provocative actions serve to arouse the anger and resentment of Palestinians in what is already a volatile situation.

The invasion of the sanctity of the holy places has a very harmful effect on the Middle East peace process. In this regard, the Non-Aligned Movement views all attempts to undermine the terms of reference of the Middle East peace process as a serious obstacle to the realization of peace.

At the September meeting of the ministers of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in New York, the ministers reaffirmed their determination to actively strive towards the achievement of a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. In this context, they stressed the need for the Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

Furthermore, the ministers reaffirmed that a just and comprehensive peace can be achieved only by upholding international legitimacy and relevant United Nations resolutions. The Non-Aligned Movement believes that it is incumbent on all Member States to uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, international humanitarian law and all other instruments of international law, as well as relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions. The Non-Aligned Movement therefore calls on the Israeli Government to exercise restraint and act in accordance with its stated desire to achieve peace. It further urges Israel to cease its measures of collective punishment against Palestinians, to restore the sanctity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif and to allow free access to it by Muslim worshippers.

Speaking as the representative of South Africa, I should like to say that my Government remains convinced that the leaders in Palestine and in Israel are committed to seeking a peaceful settlement of the conflict. It is for this reason that we welcome the opportunity for continued peace dialogue in Paris and Cairo in the coming days. We still look forward to a breakthrough in the negotiations, despite the violence. We believe that it is only the speedy resolution of the final status issues that will ensure lasting peace in the Middle East.

The President: I thank the representative of South Africa for his kind words addressed to me.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I intend to suspend the meeting now.

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m.